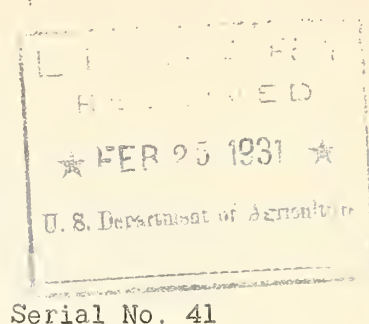
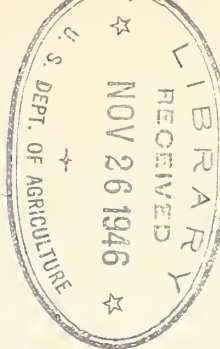


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Excerpt from a radio talk by  
W. R. M. Wharton, chief, eastern district,  
Food and Drug Administration, U. S.  
Department of Agriculture, broadcast  
through WJZ, New York, and associated  
N.B.C. stations, February 16, 1931



## HOW TO READ THE LABEL

### Canned Beans

There are a large number of varieties of beans of different qualities, and there are several different methods of preparation, each producing a product having its own special characteristics. Consequently, if you are going to be able to select the kinds you wish, you must read labels.

Canned beans fall into two groups: dry or hulled beans and succulent beans. Succulent beans are of two classes, namely, immature beans in the pod and immature hulled beans.

The principal classes of dry beans which are used for canning purposes are pea beans, small white beans, large white beans, including Otenoshi and Kotoshi beans (originating in Japan) and red and dark red kidney beans. Other classes of dry beans which are used for canning purposes to some extent are great northern beans, pinto beans, pink beans, small red beans, blackeye beans (cowpeas), lima beans, and baby lima beans: Of these,

Pea beans, small, and large white beans, including Otenoshi and Kotoshi beans, are all used to produce canned pork and beans and canned baked beans.

Now let us consider labels on pork and beans and baked beans. It is very important that label readers understand the meaning of labels on such products. Baked beans are beans of one of the classes named cooked, before canning, in an oven, with dry heat and the product of this method of preparation is preferred by some users. Boston baked beans and New England baked beans are baked beans flavored with molasses, so that the labels, "New England," or "New England Style," "Boston," or "Boston Style" mean baked beans containing molasses.

Canned beans, or canned pork and beans, labeled as such, without the word, 'baked,' are beans from among the types named, which are blanched, sealed in cans and processed with steam. Sometimes labels on these products will declare them to be steam baked, but do not be misled by such a term; they are not dry-heat baked beans. Labels on baked beans and pork and beans often declare the particular type of beans used, such as, California small white beans, or Michigan navy beans, or New York pea beans. Since there are several types of beans used to produce baked

beans and pork and beans you may notice that the beans in one can are larger than those in another. In general, the types run small to large as follows: small white, pea or navy, large white and great northern. In common parlance, the term navy beans is sometimes applied to all of these.

Canned beans, pork and beans and baked beans, other than Boston or New England style, are usually packed with one of two kinds of sauce, namely, plain sauce and tomato sauce. The amount of sauce added is just sufficient to moisten, without producing free liquid in the can. Plain sauce is made with salt, sugar, or molasses or both, spices, caramel, and water, and some manufacturers add a little vinegar or onion juice or both to the sauce. The sauce of each manufacturer differs to some extent, since different manufacturers use different amounts and kinds of spices for flavor. Tomato sauce is usually made with tomato pulp and water, and is sometimes lightly spiced and sweetened. Whenever canned beans contain tomato sauce, the fact is declared on the label.

The second most popular kind of canned dry beans is red kidney beans. These are large red or mahogany beans having a shape similar to a human kidney. They are extensively grown in the United States, but we now import some of these from Chile and probably from other countries.

Red kidney beans should not be confused with beans of Japan, known as Naga-Uzura beans. Naga-Uzura is a Japanese phrase meaning long cranberry. These are a speckled bean not resembling kidney beans in color or shape in the raw state but somewhat resembling them when cooked. They are not necessarily inferior in quality to red kidney beans but are cheaper and less popular. It is allowable for Naga-Uzura beans to be labeled, long cranberry beans. If you desire red kidney beans, you should read labels to be sure that you do not get Naga-Uzura beans or long cranberry beans. If the beans in the can are not of the red kidney variety, the label will not call them red kidney beans.

In some sections of the country, hulled cranberry beans, otherwise known as horticultural beans, are packed in cans and these are labeled, "Cranberry," "Horticultural," "Long Cranberry," or "Speckled Red Cranberry" beans. These are preferred by some users to red kidney beans. These beans are also sometimes shelled in the succulent state, and canned, in which case they may be labeled as "Fresh, Horticultural," "Shelled Cranberry Bean," or with similar expressions.

When dry red beans, or pink beans are packed in cans, the label will generally give you an appropriate statement of the kind of beans contained. Do not mistake red beans for red cranberry beans, nor for red kidney beans. Each is a different variety.

Next, let us consider our second classification, viz: succulent beans. As we stated previously, these occur as immature hulled beans and as immature beans in the pod. The product most frequently canned as



immature hulled beans is lima beans. Lima beans go to the factories in three conditions of ripeness: (1) Green, that is, green in color and immature; (2) Fresh white, that is, immature small white beans; and (3) ripe or mature white beans. All of these are put up in cans and sold as Lima beans and the labels will tell you whether the product is mature dried limas, soaked to restore tenderness, or whether immature green or immature white lima beans. The term, "Ripe Baby Limas, prepared from soaked dried beans," for example, means dried small white lima beans, soaked and canned. The label tells you they are ripe, and it will tell you that the beans are soaked. On the other hand, if the can contains the immature green tender product, the label will call them "lima beans" or "green lima beans," either of which will mean that they are the succulent product. In the labeling of canned lima beans, the term, "green lima beans" is reserved for fresh beans that are green in color. This term indicates not only immaturity of the vegetable, but also its color. The term, "green lima beans," should not be used if there is present an appreciable quantity of white beans, even though the white beans be fresh, immature and succulent. Lima beans are sometimes called butter beans, but do not confuse lima beans with butternut beans; they are of another distinct species, although butternut beans have sometimes been labeled as a lima type of beans.

Next, let us consider succulent string beans and stringless beans. In the case of some varieties, the development of the fibrous bundles at the front and back of the pod is so slight as to be unobjectionable, and not necessary to be removed. These are called stringless beans. Of the beans in the pod, falling in the succulent class, packed in the immature state, there are two kinds, green beans and wax beans. The following are the most frequently used green bean varieties: refugee, cranberry, Kentucky wonder and giant stringless. Of the varieties of wax beans used for preparing succulent canned beans in the pod are: refugee wax, golden wax, white wax, kidney wax, roundpod wax, and flat-pod wax. In canning practice, the beans are brought to the factories, the tips and ends are snipped off, the strings are removed, and they are sized or cut in short lengths, and blanched, that is scalded in hot water -- placed in cans and sterilized by steam process.

The word "stringless" on a label means that the particular lot of beans covered by the label is without objectionable strings. Labels will always tell you when the product is a wax bean. Labels often state the variety of the beans with such expressions as stringless cranberry beans, or tiny refugee beans, or whole green beans, or golden wax beans or white wax beans, or Refugee Stringless Beans.

Succulent pod beans are graded into four grades, "Fancy", "Extra Standard," "Standard," and "Seconds." Often one of the first three grade terms appears on the labels. They represent successive qualities of perfection and tenderness. The term "Seconds," is never used on labels. Sometimes tough and poorly flavored beans are substituted for string beans or stringless beans. These are, of course, not a proper type for producing string or stringless beans.

